



20th July 2024



Dear Suzanne

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## Labour Snagged in Golden Web

Following the general election in July 2024, the ties between housing associations and Parliament have been strengthened with the new suite of MPs including no less than five ex-housing association executives. Four are members of the the Labour Party and one is a Liberal Democrat.

[Article](#)

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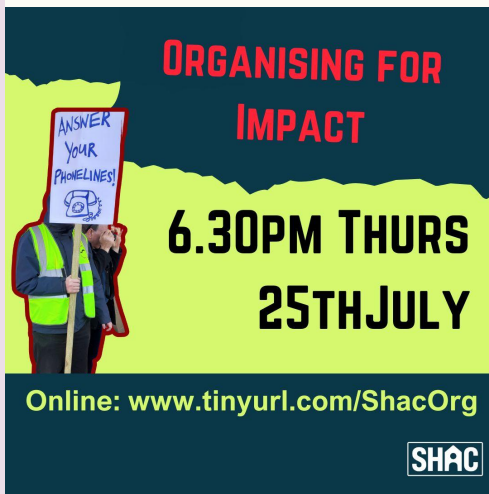
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What this means is that we won't automatically find a sympathetic ear in Parliament, so our task of building alliances and organising to unite those affected by bad housing has become ever more urgent and important. We will shortly send out our programme of actions for political lobbying and hope that all members will use their powers as constituents to further our collective aims.

Read more [here](#).



**ORGANISING FOR IMPACT**

ANSWER YOUR PHONE LINES!

**6.30PM THURS 25TH JULY**

Online: [www.tinyurl.com/ShacOrg](http://www.tinyurl.com/ShacOrg)

**SHAC**

**6.30pm**

**Thursday 25th July**

[Online Zoom link](#)

[Add event to your calendar](#)

## Organising for Impact

**6.30pm, Thursday 25th July**

We're stepping up our organising and invite all to join our platform of speakers to talk about different actions planned or underway in our groups. Our WhatsApps in particular have proved popular forums for sharing experiences, but we hope to develop them further as hubs for taking action.

We have speakers who will introduce ideas:

- **Peter** - using new Ombudsman & Regulator powers.
- **Alasdair** - collating service charge comparison data.
- **Simona** - estate level organising.
- **Liliana** - withholding payment.
- **Richard** - engaging with executives.
- **Suz** - political intervention.

The introductions will be followed by an **open discussion** to hear your ideas. Please join us.



**hqn**

**AT YOUR SERVICE?**

Tenants and leaseholders are increasingly upset about the size of service charges. Can social landlords do more to manage their anger? Neil Merrick investigates.

**SHAC** in the news

Read online - Page 16

Download article

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## SHAC and Service Charges

### Back in the News

Our campaign to end service charge abuse was once again featured in the media, this time by Housing Quality Network's magazine. We were interviewed alongside the Leasehold Advisory Service (LAS), and highlighted the inflation-busting rises that our members have experienced.

The article also featured one of our members, Laura Benkis, who has staunchly withheld payment of disputed charges from Clarion, and who is an inspiration for refusing payment until her landlord can prove their legitimacy.

In a direct contrast to SHAC, the LAS advises *"disgruntled leaseholders not to withhold payments, as they could be in breach of their lease and face repossession. Better to pay up, buy some breathing space, and argue about the charges later"*.

Any member with experience of service charge abuse will

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understand the utter futility of this advice. Landlords have not resorted to legal action against SHAC members withholding payment, and it is only the landlord who benefits from 'breathing space'. Paying up will reduce to zero any incentive for landlords to address inaccuracies. Such advice is as effective as urging thieves to return their stolen items.

SHAC will support withholding payment until the law actually forces landlords to charge tenants and residents accurately for services.

Read the article [online](#) or [download](#) it, see more about the [End Service Charge Abuse](#) campaign, and get [advice on withholding payment](#) as safely as possible.



[Read Access Online](#)

## Campaign for Accessible Housing

SHAC is featured in the summer edition of Access Online, a magazine produced by charity [HAD](#), which promotes inclusion and equality for all Disabled people in all areas of life by providing access to relevant information, advice and support.

The charity delivers services that empower and enable disabled people to have the freedom of choice, access their rights to live independently and gain equality. The group is also a channel and voice for Disabled people to campaign on the issues they identify as important.

The summer edition of HAD's magazine is dedicated to exploring big questions on disability and housing, including the cost of adaptations, the shortfall in accessible housing, and inadequate standards.



## SHAC's Thriving WhatsApp Communities

Our WhatsApp groups are proving to be a great way to bring tenants and residents together so that they can share experiences and plan action.

The main SHAC Campaigns group is open to all. Others are landlord specific. We've recently added A2 Dominion to the list. Click the relevant link below to join.

- [SHAC Campaigns](#)
  - [Tribunals Support](#)
  - [SHAC Leaseholders & Shared Owners](#)
- |   |  |                                      |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| • <a href="#"><u>Clarion</u></a>              | • <a href="#"><u>Housing</u></a>         | • <a href="#"><u>Home Group</u></a>  |
| • <a href="#"><u>Hyde</u></a>                 | • <a href="#"><u>L&amp;Q</u></a>         | • <a href="#"><u>Wandle</u></a>      |
| • <a href="#"><u>MTVHA</u></a>                | • <a href="#"><u>Southern</u></a>        | • <a href="#"><u>Councils</u></a>    |
| • <a href="#"><u>Notting Hill Genesis</u></a> | • <a href="#"><u>Peabody</u></a>         | • <a href="#"><u>THCH</u></a>        |
| • <a href="#"><u>Riverside / One</u></a>      | • <a href="#"><u>Guinness / SBHA</u></a> | • <a href="#"><u>A2 Dominion</u></a> |

If you don't have WhatsApp, you can download it to your phone and computer [here](#). You can also mute it if you don't want notifications each time someone posts a comment.



[Join  
Nextdoor](#)

## Nextdoor Network

Posting a message on the Nextdoor app is one great way to encourage tenants and residents from your landlord (or other housing associations) to join SHAC and build critical strength.

Nextdoor is a Facebook-style social networking site that links people in the same locality. You can find out more and get set up [here](#).

Some of our members have been very successful in using

it to raise awareness of SHAC's work, in one case getting 1,800 views for a single post, and recruiting neighbours who are also residents of her landlord.

## Missed an Update?

Previous issues of SHAC Action can be downloaded [here](#).

## Take Action

[Sign the Unfair & Uncapped Pledge](#) | [Make a Donation](#) | [Join an Event](#)

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